

Business Plan

2019-20



Reshaping Standards, Enabling Change

Every day, social workers support millions of people to improve their chances in life. Social Work England is a specialist body taking a new approach to regulating the profession. We believe in the power of collaboration and share a common goal with those we will regulate- to protect the public, enable positive change and ultimately improve people's lives.

Our journey to become the new specialist regulator of the profession is both exciting and challenging. Our ambition is to anchor everything we do in social work values, whilst at the same time welcoming new ways of working that empower professionals to be the very best for the benefit of those who need their support.

Social work is fundamentally about people. That's why dialogue remains at the heart of our approach during set-up phase and beyond. We've reached out to as many people as possible who share a connection with the profession, including critically those with lived experience. This year we'll continue to embed that engagement-led approach throughout our organisation to shape our work, find solutions and challenge assumptions.



Professor The Lord Patel of Bradford OBE

Chair

Our work to redefine professional standards remains at the forefront, and we'll continue to refine our day to day operations across registration, fitness to practise, and education and training. Many of your views shared during our spring 2019 consultation activity will drive this work forward, ensuring that when things go wrong quick, responsive and proportionate regulation allows us to be focused on the real-life impact of our decisions.

We recognise that social work is an ever-changing profession with competing demands and priorities. We're continuing to work closely with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) to ensure an effective transition for all registrants to Social Work England as part of the hand-over of service.

As we prepare to launch, we're both excited and mindful that this is the very beginning of our journey. As we continue to grow in staff numbers and evolve into our specialist regulator role we are determined that Social Work England will make a positive and lasting contribution to the public, professionals and society.



Colum Conway

Chief Executive

Our Purpose

Social work is about people. Our purpose is to regulate social workers in England so that people receive the best possible support whenever they might need it in life. We are committed to raising standards through collaboration with everyone involved in social work.

We are one national organisation for all social workers, offering proportionate regulation and effective collaboration to enable a diverse profession to find solutions and take charge of their own future. We are a specialist regulator focused on enabling positive change in social work.

- We will actively **collaborate** and partner with all those involved in social work to define and improve standards and protect the public.
- We will **redefine** the framework for regulation.
- We will offer **quick and responsive** regulation that is focused on the real-life impact of our decisions.
- We will use technology and data to improve our understanding of the social work landscape and to inform our decisions at every stage.
- We will be **transparent** in our processes, and open about how decisions are made.
- We will **constantly evolve**. Our new approach sets us on the right course, but our organisation will take time to grow and develop as we learn from our experience.

Our new approach to social work regulation will contribute to our overarching aim of public protection by:

- **Setting profession-specific standards** to clarify expectations about the knowledge, skills, values and behaviours required to become and remain registered as a social worker in England.
- **Introducing a new system of approving initial education and training** to help social workers to be better prepared for the challenges of direct practice.
- **Setting profession-specific standards for initial education and training** to ensure that newly qualified social workers are prepared for the challenges of direct practice.
- **Setting standards for and approving and recognising post-qualification specialisms** to help bring consistency to social work career pathways.
- **Implementing a proportionate fitness to practise system** which ensures public protection, reduces stress on social workers and supports practice improvement.
- **Setting out expectations for continuing professional development** to ensure that all social workers maintain their fitness to practise and that where this may not be the case, we take action to ensure our standards are met.

Our Plans for April 2019 to March 2020

This business plan describes our delivery plans for the period from April 2019 to March 2020. We will also produce a strategic plan describing our long-term ambitions.

The design of our core regulatory functions means that from day one, we will be enabling positive change in social work on behalf of the public. Our legislation means that we can take a more proportionate approach to fitness to practise proceedings. Online registration will streamline the effort involved for new and renewing registrants. Our professional standards, created in collaboration with the profession, will strengthen the connection between social workers and their standards. Our education and training standards and approval processes will provide assurance of the quality of social workers entering the profession. Our continuous professional development process will provide assurance to the public that existing social workers continue to build their skills and experience.

At the same time as preparing the organisation to deliver the core regulatory functions set out above, we will develop our long-term strategy. We will take a collaborative approach to setting out our ambitions for the next three to five years, describing how we will build on our stable foundations to deliver effective and proportionate regulation to enable positive change in people's lives.

Throughout the year, we will continue to work towards delivery of the objectives set out in our 2018/19 business plan, building on the progress we have already made in preparation for becoming the regulator. We will remain focused on designing an organisation which will be effective at protecting the public from day one.

Social Work England comprises five directorates, each making a vital contribution to our overarching objective of protecting the public. The five directorates each have their own specialisms, but effective collaboration between all five is essential to achieving our objectives. We are building our fitness to practise, standards, and registration and quality assurance directorates to deliver our new approach to social work regulation. Supporting these three directorates are our legal and finance and procurement directorates, both of which play crucial roles supporting and enabling effective and efficient practices.

In addition to the directorates, we describe in this plan five cross-cutting thematic areas. These five areas - consultation, communications, people, information technology and data, and strategy and planning - are fundamental areas of work that support all aspects of the organisation and help shape our ongoing evolution.

For each theme and directorate, we set out in the next section what we plan to do, how we will do it, and how we will know if we have succeeded.

What we plan to do:

- Ensure, through consultation, our rules and standards are optimised to support our overarching objective of protecting the public.

How we will do it:

- Work collaboratively with social workers, regulation experts and people with lived experience of social work to develop suitable professional standards, registration rules, education and training rules and standards, and our fitness to practise rules.
- Complete our consultation with the public and all stakeholders associated with the social work profession to ensure our rules and standards are informed by people who have an interest in our work.
- Publish our professional standards, our standards for education and training and our rules for registration and fitness to practise.
- In early 2020, launch consultation on social worker registration fees to enable a revised fee structure to be implemented from September 2020.

How we will know if we have succeeded:

- We can show how our rules and standards enable us to better protect the public.
- We receive positive feedback from consultation activities and we can show how consultation has influenced the design of our standards and rules.
- Our rules and standards are agreed by the Secretary of State and we receive positive feedback following consultation on key supporting policies.
- We have launched the consultation on registration fees.

What we plan to do:

- Deliver meaningful, proportionate and timely communication activity to establish Social Work England as an engagement-led organisation leading up to launch and beyond.

How we will do it:

- Continue to establish and grow our social media and digital channels to provide a relevant and timely and trusted space to interact with professionals, the public and those with lived experience.
- Develop a programme of proportionate and timely external engagement activity that routinely updates and engages audiences on the evolution of Social Work England.
- Support the directorates to deliver their objectives by creating bespoke communication plans and associated products.
- Bridging information gaps by working alongside HCPC and other partners to reassure social workers on what the transfer of regulatory functions to Social Work England means for them.
- Establishing our media relations function and managing our media output to support emerging business objectives.
- Developing our internal communication channels to ensure our brand values are realised and embedded throughout the organisation.

How we will know if we have succeeded:

- Continued growth of social media channels and successful launch of new corporate website.
- Positive sentiment, coverage and feedback from our external engagement activity.
- Meaningful and accurate messaging developed for fitness to practise, education, registration and standards – right moment, right content, right channel.
- Consistent messaging from both HCPC and Social Work England on the transfer of registrants.
- Relationships with trade press established and positive media mentions.
- Staff understand our role and have a positive connection to our brand, values and language.
- Increased awareness of Social Work England and its core values amongst professionals.

What we plan to do:

- Have the right people, structure, culture and working practices to enable delivery of our objectives.
- Deliver a suitably qualified and fully trained workforce by the time we go live, including professional advisers, investigators, case examiners and a full team of independent adjudicators.

How we will do it:

- Continue to implement our recruitment plan to increase our overall capacity.
- Implement our learning and development programme, including our training provision and occupational health offer, to ensure our people are supported to perform well in their roles.
- Conduct an employee satisfaction survey to identify good practice and areas for improvement.
- Continue to develop our human resources and recruitment policies, ensuring they remain fit for purpose.
- Continue to review and refine the structure of the organisation to ensure we are effectively managed and appropriately structured.

How we will know if we have succeeded:

- We attract the right number of high-quality applicants to fill our vacancies.
- Our employee satisfaction survey indicates that our people feel well-trained, able to fulfil their duties, and are supported and engaged in their roles.
- We have the right skills, knowledge and expertise to deliver our objectives.

What we plan to do:

- Design and deliver digital solutions that enable us to deliver our regulatory functions and which make it easy for social workers, people who use social work services and the public to interact with us.
- Ensure a smooth, safe and seamless transfer of data and functions from HCPC to Social Work England.

How we will do it:

- Complete the development and delivery of our digital services to support efficient and effective regulatory functions.
- By May 2019, deliver a test version of the full digital services.
- Closely monitor progress to ensure we remain on track to deliver an operationally-ready digital service well in advance of December 2019 to allow for a significant testing phase.
- By July 2019, develop in partnership with HCPC detailed transition plans for each functional area to ensure we are ready to become the regulator.
- Ensure the transfer and test of data is managed safely in line with the General Data Protection Regulation legislation.
- Ensure the safe and effective transfer of fitness to practise casework from HCPC.
- Ensure that any issues relating to transition are escalated to the sponsoring department.

How we will know we have succeeded:

- Our digital services are fully tested and ready to be launched when we go live.
- The system facilitates increased efficiency and reliability in managing registrations, education approvals and fitness to practise cases compared to current regulatory arrangements.
- Our system reduces the amount of time and effort it takes for a social worker to register and the time and effort it takes for us to process the registration.
- Data is imported into our IT systems in accordance with GDPR.
- Data transferred from HCPC is fully integrated with and accessible from our systems.
- We have securely transferred all active cases from the HCPC whilst maintaining statutory deadlines, without loss of information and without delays to casework progression.

What we plan to do:

- Ensure effective governance, strategy and planning structures are in place to support the Chief Executive, Chair and Board delivering our strategic objectives.
- Provide appropriate infrastructure to facilitate effective operations.

How we will do it:

- Ensure appropriate governance structures and information flows are available to the Board, Audit and Risk Committee and Remuneration Committee to allow them to provide effective oversight.
- Develop a three-year strategic plan supported by an annual business planning cycle.
- Monitor and report on our performance against our project and business plans to ensure successful delivery.
- Continue to develop our approach to risk management, generating effective mitigations to support successful delivery of projects, operations and strategy.
- Agree with the sponsoring department a final version of the framework document.
- Continue to work closely with our contractors through to completion to ensure that the ongoing changes to our infrastructure meet our needs.

How we will know if we have succeeded:

- We publish our business plan for 2019-20 by June 2019 and our corporate strategy for 2020-22 in early 2020.
- Our approach to risk management actively contributes to successful delivery of projects, operations and strategy.
- The framework document is agreed and published on our website by January 2020.
- Our infrastructure is fit for purpose, accommodates our Sheffield-based staff and has the capacity to host the expected number of hearings.

What we plan to do:

- Ensure our registration rules are fair and proportionate, deliver an efficient and effective registration process and meet our statutory obligations.

How we will do it:

- Deliver an online space that will allow applicants and registrants to apply, renew, restore and update their personal details.
- Deliver a front-facing registration and advice customer helpdesk that will deal with all Social Work England initial enquiries by telephone and email.
- Develop the process and policy for recording and audit of continuous professional development.
- Develop the right policies and processes to deliver an effective registration function.
- Draft and consult on guidance to support applicants and registrants.

How we will know if we have succeeded:

- All registrations and renewals will be completed online.
- Applications for registration are processed within 10 working days, in line with rules.
- All registrants will have created online accounts.
- Our internal quality assurance activity confirms that the registration process is effective and efficient, and that we are working within our statutory framework and internal targets.
- We have sought and received feedback at the end of the first quarter of operation, and this feedback is used to refine and improve the registration process.

What we plan to do:

- Provide assurance that the quality of training for social workers, best interests assessors and approved mental health professionals is sufficient to produce people who are capable of meeting our professional standards.

How we will do it:

- Engage widely and proactively with education establishments and course providers to develop an effective approach to the inspection, approval and monitoring of social work education and training courses in England.
- Begin scheduling course inspections and conduct pre-approval assessment for courses requiring approval for academic delivery in 2020.
- Develop a quality assurance evidence framework that ensures that our quality assurance function is informed by the expertise of the profession and stakeholders.
- Appoint and train associate inspectors who will be actively conducting a programme of course approval inspections and course monitoring.

How we will know if we have succeeded:

- Feedback from course providers indicates positive and effective engagement throughout the quality assurance process.
- The amount of time it takes to complete the approval of new courses, reapproval processes and course monitoring is proportionate and efficient.

What we plan to do:

- Design and deliver in collaboration with key stakeholders a fitness to practise process that is robust, proportionate and efficient.

How we will do it:

- Work collaboratively with HCPC to better understand its ongoing casework and to ensure that casework progression is not adversely affected by the transfer of responsibility.
- Establish effective standard operating procedures, which realise the full potential of the new powers available to Social Work England under the rules and regulations.
- Deliver our initial findings about fitness to practise to the profession at a local level through our regional engagement strategy.
- Design a quality assurance framework, electronic case management system and modern reporting capabilities that enable us to identify key trends and intelligence from fitness to practise activity.

How we will know if we have succeeded:

- We will be able to receive and investigate new concerns and schedule hearings from the day we go live.
- Our new rules and procedures deliver robust risk assessments at case reception and the full range of consensual disposal options at the case examiner stage.
- Our findings from engagement activity and improved data intelligence allow us to adapt our rules, policies and guidance.
- Our electronic case management system is modern, secure and capable of delivering intelligent operational and management reports.

What we plan to do:

- Embed the Professional and Education and Training Qualifying standards and begin to build on them to ensure they are meaningful for the profession.
- Lead on the Regional Engagement Strategy.
- Establish a systematic means of continuing our dialogue and collaboration with social workers.
- Provide the organisation with information and advice on key policy and legislative issues, changes and developments, the potential impact on social work and regulation, and what our position should be in response.

How we will do it

- Create a series of drivers that will deliver our strategic ambition for what specialist social work regulation means and how it can make a positive contribution to social work.
- Publish our professional standards, our standards for education and training and our rules for registration and fitness to practise and publish guidance on the professional standards.
- By September 2019, have in place the team of people and the support infrastructure required to take forward our regional engagement strategy.
- Ensure that people with lived experience of social work are actively engaged and working with us across all aspects of our work.
- Ensure that the social work profession, in all of its contexts, is actively engaged with us.
- By May 2019, have commenced a rolling programme of workplace shadowing, ensuring we remain close to practice, and are seen as an open and transparent regulator.
- Have established a system of informing and advising the organisation on policy and legislative changes and developments, and our position in response.
- Before the end of the year, we have commissioned research into a key area affecting social work or regulatory practice.

How we will know if we have succeeded:

- Our Regional Engagement Team is in place and actively building relationships and networks at a local and regional level.
- People with lived experience of social work are actively engaged in our work and providing challenge and assistance across all aspects of what we do.

- Social workers see us as a responsive regulator and engage with us regularly through the various aspects of our work.
- We are contributing to discussions and decisions in the sector on policy and legislative changes/developments, the potential impact on social work and/or regulation.
- We have commissioned research into an area of practice where additional, specialist analysis is required to shape our approach and position.

What we plan to do:

- Ensure that all core finance and procurement systems and processes are fully integrated into the day-to-day operations of Social Work England.
- Develop a 3-year strategic financial forecast to support Social Work England's strategic, business and project objectives.

How we will do it:

- Provide timely, accurate and insightful management information to support organisational decision making.
- Fully develop and test all our systems, processes and controls prior to full implementation.
- Develop opportunities for user feedback to improve and refine systems and processes.
- Identify examples of best practice within the Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sector as well as externally to drive process improvements and ensure value for money.
- Engage proactively with organisational leaders as business partners to identify information/data requirements and devise Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Continually seek to review strategic, business and operational assumptions throughout the financial period and assess their impact of future period forecasts.
- Provide financial management training and support to all individuals with financial or decision-making responsibilities.

How we will know if we have succeeded:

- All system users are fully trained and able to freely access finance and procurement systems and have access to a fully documented support framework.
- System implementation leads to an improved level of reliability, efficiency and accuracy of management information.
- Delivery of timely and accurate management information packs (inclusive of monthly and quarterly forecasts) to directors and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).
- Timely submission of management returns to Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).
- Preparation of a 3-year strategic financial forecast by December 2019.

What we plan to do:

- Ensure that Social Work England operates in accordance with relevant legislation and that that our decision-making is legally robust.

How we will do it:

- Recruit a team of legal, data protection and information, and internal quality and improvement specialists.
- Fully integrate the legal function into day-to-day operations.
- Deliver and manage a contracted bespoke external legal service for fitness to practise investigations, hearings and advocacy.
- Raise legal awareness across our directorates and provide updates on key legislative developments that affect our regulation or our business activities.
- Design and implement policies and procedures to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, particularly in relation to data protection and information governance.
- Establish a programme of internal quality and improvement work in readiness for becoming the regulator.

How we will know if we have succeeded:

- Recruitment to the legal directorate functions is complete by summer 2019.
- The external legal service for fitness to practise investigations, hearings and advocacy is in place and performance adheres to service level agreements.
- We have produced our information governance strategy and we can demonstrate compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and other relevant legislation, in accordance with the Information Commissioner's Office guidance.
- A regular schedule of legal training and legal updates for Social Work England employees is in place.
- Our internal quality and improvement work is underway and we are report internally on our findings and improvements from the first three months of operation.

Resources

In order to deliver our plans, we need to be able to fund our people, equipment, premises and services. The table below summarises our budget requirement for 2019-20. Our budget requirement is subject to quarterly review and reforecasting.

Annual Resource Budget - 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

Item	£
Administration (exc. depreciation)	£nil
Programme	£8.865m
Capital	£1.706m
Depreciation (Admin)	£0.703m
Total	£11.301m

Growing Success

As a new organisation, we are continually evolving and remain firmly focused on becoming an effective specialist regulator for the social work profession. We're mindful of course, that this is only the very start of our journey. The qualitative success criteria we have identified in this plan underpin each of our five thematic areas and five directorates to reflect the essential foundations we will build to support our ambition to enable positive change for the public, professionals and everyone who has an interest in social work. But we are also looking forward to the future. Our corporate strategy will guide our operational goals longer term across the first three years, including quantitative performance indicators that will measure success, create benchmarks and drive forward organisational improvement.

Through the year, we will collate evidence to help us understand whether we have succeeded in delivering this plan and to provide a robust evidence-base to help guide our ongoing evolution. We will produce a regular report on our success criteria to allow our leadership team and board to monitor progress and guide our development effectively.



Thematic Area	Success Criteria
Consultation	We can show how our rules and standards enable us to better protect the public.
	We receive positive feedback from consultation activities and we can show how consultation has influenced the design of our standards and rules.
	Our rules and standards are agreed by the Secretary of State and we receive positive feedback following consultation on key supporting policies.
	We have launched the consultation on registration fees.
Communications	Continued growth of social media channels and successful launch of new corporate website.
	Positive sentiment, coverage and feedback from our external engagement activity.
	Meaningful and accurate messaging developed for fitness to practise, education, registration and standards – right moment, right content, right channel.
	Consistent messaging from both HCPC and Social Work England on the transfer of registrants.
	Relationships with trade press established and positive media mentions.
	Staff understand our role and have a positive connection to our brand, values and language.
	Increased awareness of Social Work England and its core values amongst professionals.

	Success Criteria
People	We attract the right number of high-quality applicants to fill our vacancies.
	Our employee satisfaction survey indicates that our people feel well-trained, able to fulfil their duties, and are supported and engaged in their roles.
	We have the right skills, knowledge and expertise to deliver our objectives.
Information Technology and Data Transfer	Our digital services are fully tested and ready to be launched when we go live.
	The system facilitates increased efficiency and reliability in managing registrations, education approvals and fitness to practise cases compared to current regulatory arrangements.
	Our system reduces the amount of time and effort it takes for a social worker to register and the time and effort it takes for us to process the registration.
	Data is imported into our IT systems in accordance with GDPR.
	Data transferred from HCPC is fully integrated with and accessible from our systems.
	We have securely transferred all active cases from the HCPC whilst maintaining statutory deadlines, without loss of information and without delays to casework progression.
Strategy and Planning	We publish our business plan for 2019-20 by June 2019 and our corporate strategy for 2020-22 by early 2020.
	Our approach to risk management actively contributes to successful delivery of projects, operations and strategy.
	The framework document is agreed and published on our website by January 2020.
	Our infrastructure is fit for purpose, accommodates our Sheffield-based staff and has the capacity to host the expected number of hearings

Directorate	Success Criteria
Registration and Quality Assurance	All registrations and renewals will be completed online.
	Applications for registration are processed within 10 working days, in line with rules.
	All registrants will have created online accounts.
	Our internal quality assurance activity confirms that the registration process is effective and efficient, and that we are working within our statutory framework and internal targets.
	We have sought and received feedback at the end of the first quarter of operation, and this feedback is used to refine and improve the registration process.
	Feedback from course providers indicates positive and effective engagement throughout the quality assurance process.
	The amount of time it takes to complete the approval of new courses, reapproval processes and course monitoring is proportionate and efficient.
Fitness to Practise	We will be able to receive and investigate new concerns and schedule hearings from the day we go live.
	Our new rules and procedures deliver robust risk assessments at case reception and the full range of consensual disposal options at the case examiner stage.
	Our findings from engagement activity and improved data intelligence allow us to adapt our rules, policies and guidance.
	Our electronic case management system is modern, secure and capable of delivering intelligent operational and management reports.
Standards	Our Regional Engagement Team is in place and actively building relationships and networks at a local and regional level.
	People with lived experience of social work are actively engaged in our work and providing challenge and assistance across all aspects of what we do.
	Social workers see us as a responsive regulator and engage with us regularly through the various aspects of our work.
	We are contributing to discussions and decisions in the sector on policy and legislative changes and developments and the potential impact on social work and regulation.
	We have commissioned research into an area of practice where additional, specialist analysis is required to shape our approach and position.

Directorate	Success Criteria
Finance and Procurement	All system users are fully trained and able to freely access finance and procurement systems and have access to a fully documented support framework.
	System implementation leads to an improved level of reliability, efficiency and accuracy of management information.
	Delivery of timely and accurate management information packs (inclusive of monthly and quarterly forecasts) to directors and the Executive Leadership Team.
	Timely submission of management returns to Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).
	Preparation of a 3-year strategic financial forecast by December 2019.
Legal	Recruitment to the legal directorate functions is complete by summer 2019.
	The external legal service for fitness to practise investigations, hearings and advocacy is in place and performance adheres to service level agreements.
	We have produced our information governance strategy and we can demonstrate compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and other relevant legislation, in accordance with the Information Commissioner's Office guidance.
	A regular schedule of legal training and legal updates for Social Work England employees is in place.
	Our internal quality and improvement work is underway and we are report internally on our findings and improvements from the first three months of operation.